

States Congress. Michael has spent most of his professional career on the staff of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. Since the 105th Congress, he has led the Democratic Staff of the Full Committee as our Staff Director.

Michael graduated from Birmingham Southern College in 1969 and attended graduate school at Memphis State University. He began his career in public service as a VISTA volunteer in South Dakota. While Michael's VISTA pay was low, the benefits were priceless. In South Dakota, Mike met and married his lovely wife, Jo Ann Gerhardt (Joey). Joey and Mike have one son, Michael who is a senior at George Mason University.

In January of 1973 Michael came to Washington with the staff of former Senator James Abourezk, (D-SD). He later served as a senior Legislative Assistant to the current Democratic Leader of the United States Senate, TOM DASCHLE, during Senator DASCHLE's tenure in the House of Representatives.

Michael has spent over 16 years on the staff of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, first as a professional staff member for the former Subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment and later as Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, and finally as Democratic Staff Director for the Full Committee on Veterans Affairs. Immediately prior to his service as Democratic Staff Director for the House Committee, Michael spent two years as the Deputy Postmaster of the United States Senate.

Michael's extensive knowledge of veterans' issues coupled with his knowledge of the political process has been of immense assistance to me. When we worked together on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Michael was a leader in monitoring the quality of benefits and health care services provided to veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs. As Democratic Staff Director for the Full Committee, he has worked with colleagues to affect passage of legislation I introduced. Michael was especially helpful in working on legislation to improve education benefits under the Montgomery G.I. Bill, to improve veterans' employment opportunities, to help end homelessness among veterans and in overseeing the work of the Democratic staff.

Committee members will miss Michael's knowledge and political astuteness. Committee staff will miss his reassuring presence, his wonderful smile, his careful editing, his insight and his wealth of information. Our Nation's veterans will miss his dedication to truth and integrity. I will miss a dedicated public servant and a good friend.

I want to thank Michael for his decades of service to the public good and his many acts of personal kindness. Michael, we will miss you. May you enjoy your well-earned retirement.

TRIBUTE TO MR. SHAWN MICHAEL BLAS

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Mr. Shawn Michael Blas for completing his undergraduate degree in Crimi-

nology, with a minor in Psychology, at the University of New Mexico.

The Criminology major at the University of New Mexico is one of the most highly regarded programs of its kind in the nation. I am proud of Shawn for his tremendous achievement and his many long hours of study in order to earn this prestigious degree. Shawn was always a diligent student and outstanding member of the community while growing up on Guam. In fact, he was valedictorian of his graduating class at Evangelical Christian Academy in Chalan Pago, Guam in 1999. It is no surprise that he has excelled at the college level, and I have no doubt that he will continue to serve the community as he pursues his career in law enforcement.

I also want to take the time to commend Shawn's parents, Frances and Danny Blas of Deddo, Guam, whom I have known for many years. They have been mentoring and supportive parents to Shawn, their youngest son, and they have every reason to be proud of his achievement.

Today I join with Shawn's family and friends in congratulating him on his accomplishment and in wishing him the very best in his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF CONNIE B. POPE, INCOMING PRESIDENT OF THE ALABAMA FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Connie B. Pope, of Opelika, Alabama. On May 17, 2003, Connie Pope will be sworn in as the new President of the Alabama Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club at their 84th Convention in Birmingham, Alabama.

Ms. Pope has been a member of the Business and Professional Women's Club since 1993 and has been an active member of the Opelika Chapter, where she has held all officer positions including two years as President of the club. In addition, on a statewide basis, she has served on various committees, as well as the officer positions of Secretary, Vice President, and, currently, President-Elect.

Connie Pope holds undergraduate degrees from Auburn University in social work and Troy State University in human resources. For the past eight years, she has worked as a legal assistant for attorney Margaret Mayfield of Opelika. In this position, she has been able to assist women in safety and equality issues, as well as long-range family and career planning. Along with her professional obligations and her positions with the Business and Professional Women's Club, Ms. Pope has found time to participate in other organizations such as the American Cancer Society, the National Association of Legal Secretaries, her church, and her local PTA. She has been married to John Pope for eleven years and has a son, Zachery, who is six years old.

Congratulations to Connie Pope and best wishes as you assume your new duties as President of the Alabama Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club.

CCH INCORPORATED

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the 90th anniversary of Riverwoods, IL based CCH Incorporated. For nearly a century, CCH has set the standard in reporting and explaining the complexities of American tax law. Their flagship product, The Standard Federal Tax Reporter, is essential to the accounting, human resources, banking, securities, insurance, government and health care professionals who must adapt to the dynamics of the federal tax code.

CCH was founded in 1913—the year that the U.S. federal income tax was created. The company has always made its home in the Chicago area. In 90 years, CCH has grown into a multi-national, public company that serves tax and legal professionals around the globe. It is a great asset to my district. The company employs more than 1,500 individuals here in Chicago and more than 2,300 across the U.S.

In spite of its tremendous growth and development, CCH has remained faithful to its original mission: to provide incomparable tax products that are clear, accurate and timely. I am most proud to represent CCH Incorporated. I congratulate them on this, the 90th anniversary of their inception, and I thank them for their innumerable contributions to legal and tax professionals throughout our district and around the world.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TAIWAN

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, Taiwan will be celebrating their president's third anniversary in office this May 20. Their president, Mr. Chen Shui-bian, has shown leadership and wisdom in the last three years.

Taiwan enjoys one of the highest standards of living in Asia and a good strong relationship with the United States. Taiwan stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States after 9/11 and gave us total support in our war with Iraq.

May Taiwan continue to enjoy economic prosperity and an ever stronger relationship with the United States. May Taiwan be successful in stopping the spread of SARS and in returning to the World Health Organization soon.

PENSION SECURITY ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2003

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reluctantly support H.R. 1000, and to express my reasons for voting against the Miller-Rangel substitute to this legislation.

During my time in Congress, I have strongly supported legislation that would help employees prepare for their retirement. Pension reform legislation affects all working Americans. As such, both parties in Congress have a responsibility to work together in a thoughtful and conscientious manner on this issue.

To that end, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1776, the bipartisan Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act of 2003, which expands savings options, empowers employees to take control of their retirement plan investments and gives workers substantial new rights to avoid over-concentration in the stock of their own company.

By modifying the rules that apply to retirement plans, the Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act provides workers with needed control over their retirement plan investments while preserving the opportunity for employee ownership. Through new diversification rights, new disclosure requirements and new tax incentives for retirement education, this legislation would help employees achieve retirement security.

I have serious concerns with the substitute before us today. Unfortunately, the substitute overreacts to the unfortunate circumstances surrounding Enron's historic bankruptcy. Congress has a duty to the American people to enact responsible legislation that will benefit employees rather than impose new administrative burdens on millions of retirement plans.

The substitute would thwart bipartisan efforts to reduce administrative burdens on employers who voluntarily sponsor retirement plans by imposing new, expensive rules on such plans. The substitute's provision that would require retirement plans to insure against vaguely defined plan asset losses would increase the cost of these retirement plans, creating a disincentive for employers to offer their employees a pension plan.

Additionally, under the substitute, a plan participant is allowed to divest of company stock held in an account after just one year. This one-year diversification provision runs the significant risk of causing disruptions in both plan administration and the markets.

Further, the substitute would require employers to create joint employer-employee retirement plan trusteeships. Employers in Kansas's Third District have assured me that this provision has the potential to complicate plan administration to the point that some employers may drop their plans altogether. The working people of this country deserve a more thoughtful, careful process from their Federal representatives.

While the substitute goes too far in seeking to ensure reasonable safeguards on employer sponsored retirement plans, the underlying bill before us today does not go quite far enough in protecting working Americans. But, it is a good start.

I am voting for the underlying bill today to keep this process moving. I hope, however, that the Senate considers strengthening the bill's provisions with regard to investment advice to ensure that the advice workers receive through their employer is truly independent. I would suggest that the Senate consider allowing, on a tax-preferred basis, individuals to seek the investment advisor of their choice. In addition, I hope the Senate addresses the issue of corporate and executive abuses brought to light in recent scandals. I submit that imposing an excise tax on excessive cor-

porate payments to senior executives in periods prior to bankruptcy is a good start. I believe this will help prevent insiders from draining assets from a company as its stock value declines.

For the record, both of these suggestions are contained within H.R. 1776, the aforementioned Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act of 2003. I urge the House to come together quickly and consider this bipartisan bill so that the Senate may have a range of options from which to advance reasonable, much needed pension reform that will benefit working Americans.

I will continue to support bipartisan efforts to reform our Nation's retirement system in a manner that benefits both employers and employees. I urge my colleagues to do the same and hope that the legislative process will ultimately produce a bipartisan conference report which we may all proudly support.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SOUTH SUBURBAN MAYORS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 108th Congress of the United States of America, I write to congratulate and commemorate the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) on its 25th Anniversary.

For the past quarter of a century, the SSMMA has provided leadership to protect and enhance the health, security, education and welfare of its people, and the vision to promote and ensure social and economic justice for more than 650,000 people in more than 40 municipalities in Chicago's South Suburban area.

The SSMMA also has served as a tireless proponent of fairness, opportunity and prosperity for the Chicago Southland for 25 years; and has spoken in a common voice—and with common sense—to further the quality of life in these communities.

Moreover, the SSMMA has served as a clearinghouse for elected officials from local, county, state and federal governments to work in harmony to improve housing, public safety, transportation, the environment, economic development, public works, technology and municipal management in its member communities.

So, in recognition of the Association's dedication and advocacy for the common good, the 108th Congress of the United States hereby applauds and congratulates the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association for 25 years of successful public service and coalition building in the community.

CONGRATULATING RYAN MROWKA OF DUNKIRK, NEW YORK ON HIS MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of my constituent, Ryan Mrowka, of Dunkirk, New York.

Ryan graduated valedictorian from Dunkirk High School in 1999. He earned an Army ROTC scholarship to Boston College and will graduate Magna Cum Laude this Monday, May 19, 2003.

Beyond his academic success, Ryan deserves recognition for his capable leadership and commitment to public service. He complemented his opportunities at Boston College with a generous spirit of involvement in campus ministry. His numerous activities included retreat planning and volunteer teaching at a local juvenile detention center. He also organized and led student trips to build homes in Appalachia and to help an orphanage in Honduras.

As an ROTC student, Ryan served as Cadet Battalion Commander; qualified as a basic parachutist at Airborne School; placed in the top tier of the "Ranger Challenge" military skills competition; and interned in the Pentagon to research the Army Transformation Plan. He completed the four-year education and training program in the top 20 percent of all U.S. Cadets, earning the prestigious "ROTC Distinguished Military Student" recognition and the "Boston College President's Award for Outstanding Cadet".

This Sunday, May 18, 2003, Ryan will be commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps. At only 22 years old, he will answer the courageous call to active duty this September 2003 as an officer in the U.S. Army.

Fittingly enough, Ryan plans to follow his four-year commitment to the Army with a career teaching social studies. He was recently inducted into the Phi Lambda Theta International Honor Society, the professional association in education, and the Golden Key National Collegiate Honor Society. Not only has he demonstrated the scholastic aptitude necessary to become an exceptional educator, but the natural potential to truly connect with, and inspire, young minds.

Mr. Speaker, college graduates like Ryan Mrowka epitomize the character and integrity of the people of Western New York. I commend him for his commitment to serve those less fortunate; willingness to protect our freedom; and dedication to educate future generations.

GEORGIANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention an editorial that appeared in Georgia's Columbus Ledger Enquirer newspaper on April 9, 2003 entitled